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ABSTRACT

Several ways in which the culture of the home in a traditional society differs from the culture of the school, as well as obstacles to efforts to coordinate school and home, are identified prior to a discussion of the educational function of the home and functions of the school. It is pointed out that, whereas in traditional societies education has been a function of the home, the school, through its power, authority, knowledge and professionalism, dominates the relationship between the home and the school through paternalistic or aggressive behavior. The position is taken that, while it is possible to provide an early childhood education at home, parental access to an early childhood learning center would be an advantage, generally. The gap between the culture of the school and of the home is seen to be widest for children from disadvantaged homes, all of whom need an early childhood education that is specially designed to initially diminish differences between home and school through involving parents in their children's schooling. Additional topics briefly discussed include (1) attitudinal obstacles to coordinating school and home, (2) the need for schools, (3) the role of language in educational settings, and (4) teacher, parent, and adult education. (Author/RH)

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BERNARD VAN LEER FOUNDATION

Second Eastern Hemisphere Seminar

(Salisbury, Zimbabwe, 24 February - 7 March 1981)

INTEGRATED AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: PREPARATION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Theme *B* : Home and School - Contrasting Cultures

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1. Home and school should really be mutually supportive. However, much as the purpose of the school is the ultimate goal of the home, home and school are constrasting cultures. The existence of this contrasting situation does hamper the full realization of the objectives of the school and the home.

2. Several factors are responsible for the difference between the home and the school. We may identify some of these. First is the formal setting of the school and the informal setting of the home. Second is the explicit and clearly set out specific functions of the school which contrasts with the diffused and more general functions of the home. Functions of the school are expected to be performed at stipulated periods and for stipulated durations in the life of a child. The home on the other hand, has the responsibility to maintain its general functions throughout the period of childhood, and for many children, through adolescence and early adulthood also. Another important factor to understand is the fact that culture changes; and cultural demands on the home change more perceptibly than they do for the school. Quite often, the home and the school may belong to different cultural stages. Schools are often regarded as middle-class institutions. Sometimes a school appears to exist in its own culture, reflecting none of the cultural patterns of the different groups in the community; setting its sight on an internal criterion-objective of its own.

3. Yet the home has to equip the child with certain behavioural patterns before the school can adequately accommodate the child. Nurture, fulfilment of the psychological needs of the child and social learning are some of the duties society expects the home to perform within the face-to-face situation of the family. The school continues the task of training children in academic and social skills. The child in school is in a larger group, receiving instruction in the company of other children.

4. Schools have become important because of the prestige accorded them by the society and because of their specialized functions and their own organizational structures. Schools have specialized expertise and professionalism in scholastic and instructional matters. In schools, authority structures are organized in a hierarchy. Society, through the government, continually makes policy statements which apply to schools. Schools also provide custodial ca

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for children. In its own internal organization, the school provides anticipatory socialization for the roles children will later play as working adults. Not only does a school teach subjects in the affective and psycho - motor domains, it also gives instruction on aspects of culture. Schools do use this powerful position to enhance their own authority.

5. Language represents in an important way, the contrasting culture of home and school. The dynamics of language as a vehicle for learning and as an expression of the level of competence is examined. This paper shows what it is in language that makes for the important role it plays in the home-school problem and how this situation might be used for the mutual benefit of the home and school. Other issues discussed concern teacher's professional preparation and how this might be re-examined in order to ensure that those who go into the profession are fully informed of the problems of the two cultures of home and school. The school curriculum itself as a community involvement curriculum will be examined and suggestions will be made as to how curricular, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities could be used to advantage.

6. Bringing the two cultures together would involve participation by the school and the home in the different activities in which the school is engaged. The teacher and the parent must get together in sharing their common facilities and in involving themselves in the proper development of their children for the eventual good and advancement of their entire community.

7. The term *home* is used in this presentation to mean a location in the community from which a child comes to the school. Thus the home as we would like to know it as a place where a child lives with his parents and siblings is included. Included also are other varieties such as polygamous and monogamous homes, nuclear and extended family homes, single parent homes, foster homes, and other residential arrangements, such as institutional homes.

Contrasting Cultures

8. Culture as is used here refers to the modes of operation, organization system, aims and objectives, goals and aspirations, rules and regulations, obligations, and sanctions, traditions and languages, methods and content, and membership and leadership patterns obtaining in the social institution called *school* on the one hand, and in the social institution called *home* on the other.

9. A careful look at any school anywhere today would probably reveal that the culture of that school is Euroamerico-centric, fashioned no matter how crudely on what schools were supposed to be in some by-gone days. The situation is made worse by the fact that even in Europe and America - to say nothing of Africa, Asia, Australasia, and Latin-America - schools maintain on the whole, the cultures of yester-year, probably unsuitable even for those days.

10. It will be submitted that the culture of the home differs from the culture of the school in several respects. First, the educational functions, objectives, method, contents, and mode of operation in the home are broader than those of the school. The approach of the home is non-formal, learning being largely incidental. Authority structure is different, relationship is intimate, obligations and sanctions are clear cut, rules and regulations are fewer and more functional. Secondly, the culture of the home is survival-

oriented, designed to meet the basic needs of the family. Formal education and the future benefits that it confers may not form part of the immediate needs of individuals in the home. Thirdly, exigencies of living, economic changes in the family, illness, bereavement and disharmony involving one or more members of the family can alter the prevailing culture in the home temporarily or for prolonged duration. The school with its relatively static culture and its more set ways of functioning is not often sensitive to the fluid nature of the home culture.

11. For a truly successful education programme, the home and the school must form part of the same cultural continuum. The ways this can be done are known to many of us. Some of these will be mentioned again by way of suggestions. However, we must further attempt to understand the nature of the obstacles in the way of any effort to make the school an extension of the home and the home an extension of the school.

Attitudinal Obstacle

12. A major obstacle in the way of any attempt to bring the school and the home closer together in the educational endeavouris in the attitudes of the home and the school towards each other, and of each towards itself.

13. First, the school has come to regard itself as the agent of education par excellence. The family or the home is regarded by the school at best as an inferior partner in the process of education of children. Quite often, the home is regarded to be a downright nuisance by the school. As such the school barely tolerates the home. The home is usually involved if at all, at set times in the school year, and by expressed invitation of the school. Very few schools gladly accept an unannounced visit by the home; worse still, a complaint from the home about the school, or any comment critical of any activity of the school not approved by the home concerned.

14. The home for its part is timid and reluctant to approach the school on behalf of its offspring. Often the organization structure and ways of the school are foreign to parents so that they are afraid to make fools of themselves by their incompetence in dealings with the school and their inability to help their own children.

15. Thus the school dominates the relationship between the home and the school through paternalistic or aggressive modes of behaviour towards the home. In the paternalistic mode, the school appears to tolerate or even appreciate the concern of the home but maintains that its own authority and suggestions are relevant on all issues. In the aggressive mode, arrogance and insensitivity characterize the behaviour of the school towards the home. Very few homes can recover from the crushing humiliation.

The Educational Function of the Home

16. Traditionally, the family provided nearly all the education a child needed. The educational roles of the family as they used to be everywhere are still performed by the family in some traditional societies. Thus among the traditional Yoribas, to take an example of a familiar society which represent many black African groups, the family provides complete education for its offspring. As an infant, the child is clothed, sheltered, comforted, fed, kept warm, clean and protected, if not always successfully from disease. Also interpersonal relationship is taught by practice first between mother and child and then between child and the extended family and later, the entire

village. All necessary physical and psychomotor practices are provided for the child to engage in, in the first year of life, and the cultural ways of life are enacted openly for the child to see. Social behaviour, greetings, respect for elders, taboos to avoid, are taught through identification and use of sanctions for violations and rewards for conformity which are all acted out in front of the child in early childhood. Through stories and songs and other aspects of oral tradition, the child is made aware of the achievements of his particular local area and of his ancestors, and of the history of his people.

17. Daily life brings the child into complete participation with the adult members of the family to the knowledge of the existence of, and the understanding of the functions of the different species of the flora and fauna of the environment. Natural phenomena and geographical features are explained sometimes in supernatural terms, sometimes in actual terms. Some are worshipped and regarded as possessing powers of blessing by their natural occurences; for example, the god of rain waters the plants, the sun god ripens the fruits and ensures harvest. The grown child is initiated into the world of the adult in elaborate ceremonies and shown how to be prepared for adult responsibilities and family continuity. Usually he takes on the job of his father and performs the same occupation of the father, an occupation he learns through years of apprenticeship in the family. The daughter also learns from the mother.

18. Some aspects of this description still exist in all families in many societies today. In most societies, the family provides for the entire education of the child in the first two or three years of life. The modern family cannot and does not perform all the educational roles of traditional societies any more because of the complexities of these roles. Historically, children had been regarded in some societies as adults in many families in the past and, as such, children were used at work to earn a living, punished, and generally treated like adults.

19. The age of reason was regarded by the Church to be the age of seven years. After that age, the child was a little adult. The abuses, neglect and ill-treatment meted out to children in many countries in the years up to the beginning of the 20th century, and the prevalence of adverse social conditions of poverty, illness and malnutrition led governments in western countries to take steps to ensure the survival of children within families. Attempts were made to safeguard children against premature, excessive and dangerous labour. Government sought to protect children against abuse, neglect, immorality, disease and insanitary surroundings. Most societies in the modern world also compelled children to go to school. These laws were intended to secure better treatment and wider opportunities for all children but in so doing they often advance government authority and diminish the powers and effectiveness of the family. Schools were created to complement the educational duties of the family. However, in its efforts to evolve more and more comprehensive and complex educational programmes and the machinery to put them across schools frequently emphasize their main role as an inducting agent for the society. This often alienates the family or, at best, makes some families unable to see themselves as the senior partner in the educational enterprise.

The Need for Schools

20. As we have seen in the case of traditional societies, that education begins in the family cannot be gainsaid. It is not always remembered however, that it continues in the family and finishes in the family. If it were poss-

ible for the modern family to supply all the educational needs of the child, there would be little need for schools. As a corollary, if the family were able to comprehend all the diverse learning and educational processes that are available in the school, it would have no difficulty in deciding to which of them children should be exposed. What "the best and wisest" (Dewey) family wants for its child's education, that must be what the school wants for its pupils. The situation everywhere, however, is that the school domain, like other social and political domains, has infringed on the family domain, using its power, authority, knowledge, and professionalism to suppress the rites of the homes.

Functions of the School

21. To educate is the general purpose of the school. Reimer defines schools as institutions which require attendance by children of specific age-groups in teacher-supervised class-rooms. Schools were originally created to be custodians of societal values, guardians of its norms, morals and mores, as well as a store-house of its knowledge in different fields. School is a place of expertise for transmitting knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour from teachers to pupils. They are to prepare children for gainful employment, that is, to give children saleable skills and to promote the spirit of enquiry and creativity and thinking. Above all, the school with the family, was to be the bedrock or preparation of children for good citizenship. As has been inferred most of these skills are beyond what a single family has the ability to provide for its children. So children were sent to school; and later schooling became compulsory in many societies.

22. It needs to be emphasized that like the family and the neighbourhood, a school is no more in essence, than a setting in which children develop, and acquire social and intellectual experiences which enable them to acquire and perfect the skills and attitudes which characterize them as individuals and in which children shape their choice and performance of adult roles.

23. However, with the increasing complexities of transmittable experiences, the eagerness with which more and more parents send their children to school and the compulsion on parents to ensure that children attend school, the school began to exert influence on the children in it. *In this regard, School's strong position was reinforced by how it does its work*, through:

(a) Its specialized function and expertise or professionalism in scholastic and instructional matters. Possessing and teaching highly structured curriculum in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

(b) Its organizational form, its hierarchical authority structure, the adult-child social and work relationship, the inevitable Teacher-Pupil age gap and knowledge gap (but not necessarily intellectual gap. The latter is often stifled if it happens to be in favour of the child). The School System includes: Nursery or Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary.

(c) The current-educational policies which often means to the children an experience of achievement differentiation and selection.

(d) Its preparatory function for social and occupational roles which is highly sought after by parents.

(e) Its function as inducting agent for formal and informal social systems, for which the government is grateful.

Some of the influences the school exerts on the children are specific and overt, operating through determined objectives. Others are more diffuse and less systematic but also more pervasive in the way they influence children. Brian Davies's *Social Control and Education* has examined the rise of compulsory schooling in Britain and the U.S.A.*

24. Now let us briefly examine what schools actually do. That school educates is still accepted by many parents; but then education means different things to different people, and different schools do different things and go about doing the same things in different ways. *Schools in every country perform four major and distinct functions.*

25. First, *Schools provide custodial care.* A study commissioned by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation of the U.S. Government in 1973 justified spending on children in schools on the basis of their custodial care because when children are in school, labour can be regulated, child labour prevention can be enforced, parents can be at work without needing to stay at home to mind children. Reimer has pointed out the social and economic investments engendered by this function of the school, so did Goodman.

26. The second function of the school is *social role selection. It is at school that students are sorted into "social slots"* which begins with choice of subjects as these subjects eventually lead to certain professions and trades for which they prepare pupils. The school therefore is a major mechanism for distributing jobs of all kinds, "replacing the family, the church and the institution of private property in this capacity"(Reimer). *Schools provide anticipatory socialization for the roles children will later play as adults,* they represent a platform for rehearsal of future positions of their pupils in the community and begin the social stratification of young citizens. "Schools define merit in accordance with the structure of the society served by schools" (Reimer).

27. *The third function of the school is the teaching of the basic values of the society. Unfortunately not all basic values in the society are necessarily desirable therefore inasmuch as schools teach all these values they indoctrinate.* All schools teach the value of competing for grades and for merits at school. Schools teach the value of being taught what is good and what is bad, and what is the "truth". The idea of being taught value contrasts very sharply with the education provided in the home before children went to school. At home children learn how to use their bodies, how to use language and how to control their emotions - most of these through self-discovery. At home children in the first five years of life learn how to depend upon themselves and how to respect the fundamental values in the society represented by the home and the neighbourhood, and they are rewarded for it. At school, however, what to learn, when to learn, where to learn and how to learn are decided by others. Children after a few weeks in schools, learn that what is worthwhile is what is taught.

28. They do not only learn these dubious values but they learn to accept these values and thus to get along in the system. School is the first highly institutionalized environment most children encounter and it has the next highest concentration of conformity values (perhaps the prison has the highest) which children must learn. As the late Paul Goodman put it:

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*Andover, Hampshire, Methuen, 1976.

> It is in the school and from the mass media, rather than at home or from their friends, that the mass of our citizens in all classes learn that life is inevitably routine, depersonalized, and venally graded; that it is best to toe the mark and shut up; that there is no place for spontaneity, (creativity) open sexuality, or free spirit. Trained in the schools, they go out to the same quality of jobs, culture, politics. This is education, miseducation, socializing to the national norms and regimenting to the national needs.

29. *The fourth function of the school is to teach skills in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.* But schools should not only transmit knowledge, attitudes and behaviours associated with each domain, they should make it possible, for children to create them. Cognitive learning is the most well known function of the school but it is not the function that takes place most often in schools, nor to which schools devote most energy. It may be regarded as the least-attended-to function, contrary to what is popularly and honestly mistakenly believed by most people to be the function of the school. As White says in the report for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, earlier referred to:

> There is an argument that school should only have the mission of cognitive growth and development. Disregarding the question of feasibility of such a goal, it might be suggested that there is another kind of restriction to be addressed to this argument: the question about whether this kind of goal is in fact the goal dictated by the public purpose.

The teaching of cognitive skills which the public think is the main function of the school is only one of the government's goals for the school.

30. The theme of this Seminar is 'Integrated and Early Childhood Education: Preparation for Social Development'. Social development is the end purpose. Early childhood education is not an end in itself. The rationale for providing a wholesome early childhood education is to ensure that the education which will follow in later childhood and adolescence succeeds. Not all Homes need Schools for Early Childhood - Period.

31. It would be clear from the educational functions of the family described earlier that early childhood education is a type of education which can be provided at home. Indeed nursery schools are not meant for children from homes where adequate child-rearing practices and socialization patterns exist. It should be an advantage, however, for all homes to have access to an early childhood learning centre, where parents who look after their own children at home can obtain helpful information on wholesome relationship with their children.

32. Early childhood education programmes available in schools, are being demanded more and more for children whose parents work and are unable to provide the necessary educational relationship at home. The kind of help to be offered here may depend on socio-economic facts of the situation. Can the mother afford not to work? Could she be made to realize that to stay at home and look after a young child is of greater benefit, in the long run, for the wholesome development of the child, than to put the child in a nursery school? Is the mother/father state-of-preparedness for the educational relationship such that it can help a pre-school child? Is the mother/father psychologically prepared to provide the necessary relationship for the pre-school child?

33. It is the child from a dis vantaged home who needs an early childhood education programme. It this type of home, however, that presents a greatly contrasting cult e to the culture of the school. Socio-economic factors, poor educational ckground, psychological inadequacy on the part of the parent would result n a poor educational relationship between parent and child. Three main actors are usually identifiable: (a) inadequate social competence; retarded development landmarks; and (c) poor language skills. Children n this situation have not had the opportunity of adequate education.

The Role of Language

34. Language is the most impor t vehicle for learning in educational settings. Halliday identified seve functions of language for a child of pre-school age:

(1) The instrumental function: "I want"
(2) The regulatory function: "That is not allowed"
(3) The interactional functio "Let us play"
(4) The personal function: "This is my toy"
(5) The heuristic function: "What is that"
(6) The imaginative function: "I'll tell you about fairies"
(7) The representational funct n: "This is like my hat".

35. Investigations carried out Ibadan (Durojaiye) show that the level of schooling by mother and pa tal socio-economic level are related to verbal expressions between mothe and their children aged 2 - 5 years.

36. A major fact of contrastin cultures of home and school is that nursery school is not part of the c ure of the child from a poor socio-economic background. What is requi d in this case is for the fact of the limited culture of the home to be i he consciousness of the school. The teacher must be able to communicate th the child. Much of the context of the school even at this early stage drawn from aspects of the symbolic world of the middle class. Thus it the case that when the child steps into the nursery school, he steps i a symbolic system which does not provide for him a linkage with his lif t home. Teachers should work with what children can offer. It is imp ant that teachers realize that the social experience that the child al dy possesses, even though not verbalized, is valid and significant. Th social experience should be adequately verbalized in appropriate language reflected to the child as valid and significant. This practical applic on of the principle of building on the child's experience is likely to sult in early overcoming of the initial language problem.

37. Teachers must realize that ildren from inadequate homes cannot benefit from school education witho an internal reorganization of the educational context of the school. drents must form part of the educational context of the school. It is the of the school to find ways, no matter how simple, of involving parents so at parents can feel adequate and confident both in relation to the chil nd to the school.

Teacher Education, Parent Education d Adult Education

38. Nursery schools, playgroup kindergartens, early childhood learning centres and other forms of pre- ool education programmes are in essence designed to complement the educatio functions of the home. It is in this

sense that they are intervention programmes. To achieve this objective, the school must come to the home, and the home must go to the school. Teachers, and directors of pre-school education programmes can only provide relevant education for the pre-school child if they know what was in the child's experience. Parents, mothers and fathers together, or in turn, also need to participate in the work of the school to get a sense of involvement in and belonging to the activities of the programmes.

39. Teachers need to be trained especially for their role in bringing the culture of the home to the school and adopting the school programme to it. Teachers must become skilled in assessing changes in the culture of the home and in making adequate allowance for these changes. Teachers must appreciate their function as agents of change in the changing cultural situations of the society and of the home.

40. It will be the duty of the school to pursue a gradual programme of parent education which will bring parents more and more into the educative processes of the school. In dealing with the home, the school must be prepared to deal with different types of homes: nuclear family homes, extended family homes, one-parent homes and residential homes. The fact remains that the influence the culture of the "home" will exert on the school, and the home culture may be harnessed for the benefit of profitable learning at school depend on the type of home. Different homes have different cultures. Sometimes it is not just parents and siblings and members of the extended family that make the "home", the neighbourhood may be part of the "home" influence. A total community involvement with the work of the school should, wherever possible, be established.

41. Adult education is also required. How does a working mother or father get a chance to be involved periodically in the work of the school? Would an informed adult population be more understanding? Would permission for odd hours off work to make a school visit be tolerated?

42. The message of this presentation is (i) that certain patterns of experience characteristic of low socio-economic background and poor environmental opportunities in certain parents, or certain homes, or certain communities are associated with inadequate social, cognitive and educational development in children from these environments; (ii) that a carefully designed programme of education in which the home and the pre-school level may correct the inadequacies in the development patterns of children from the affected environment who benefit from the educational programme; (iii) that one of the central qualities involved in child-rearing in a low socio-economic background and poor environmental opportunity is lack of adequate cognitive meaning in the mother-child communication system; (iv) that conditions for social, educational and economic poverty are preformative in the socialization processes of early childhood; and (v) that growth of cognitive processes is fostered in home-school control systems which offer and permit a relevant and meaningful experience based upon the harnessing of the complementary cultures of the home and the school.